

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM KERR OF
PITTSBURGH, PA

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, as we recognize the founding of Flag Day, I would also like to pay tribute to William Kerr. William Kerr, of Pittsburgh, PA, worked continuously for over 50 years to establish a national Flag Day. Kerr believed that the American flag had symbolized love for country since its adoption on June 14, 1777. He felt it of great importance that this date be celebrated along with Independence Day on July 4.

Kerr was born in 1868 and began his quest to establish a national holiday at the young age of 14. He was a deeply patriotic young man with a talent for speaking in public. After delivering a speech in Chicago in 1882, he started to think about the important symbolism the flag had for the American people. This love of country and flag was especially fitting when one considers that he was born and lived in a state where the American flag was first adopted.

Kerr's belief in the importance of the flag led him to organize the American Flag Association of Western Pennsylvania in 1888. He went on to speak all over the state on behalf of the organization, building momentum by urging other Pennsylvanians to join the charge. Kerr also began his efforts to lobby the United States Government to officially name June 14th a federal holiday.

In 1898, during the Spanish American War, he expanded this scope of his organization to a national level as head of the new American Flag Association. He began to visit the President of the United States on an annual basis, using his powers of persuasion at the highest possible level. At the same time, his association waged an intensive letter writing campaign to elected officials and other persons of influence.

Kerr's efforts and intensity proved successful. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson urged Americans to celebrate Flag Day, effectively making June 14th a holiday, if still an unofficial one. In 1937, Pennsylvania, his home and the birthplace of his efforts, became the first to make June 14th an official state holiday. And finally, in 1949, William Kerr was asked by President Harry Truman to witness the signing of the Bill that marked June 14th as an official federal holiday. He was 81 years old, and had worked almost his entire life for the day in which he stood by and watched as the Flag Day Act was signed into law.

William Kerr worked tirelessly to ensure that "Old Glory" has a special day to commemorate its importance to the American people. His efforts were rewarded then, and they are to be admired and noted today.

A TRIBUTE TO CAPT. JIM
FOURNIER FOR 50 YEARS OF
PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding official of the U.S.

Congress, Capt. James M. Fournier of Fountain Valley, California, who has dedicated almost 50 years of his life in public service to his country.

Twelve years ago, I stood on this same floor to thank Capt. James M. Fournier, upon his retirement as my California Chief of Staff, for his many decades of service to our country. It was the good fortune of the people of southern California that, a few years later, Jim returned to work for the citizens of the 48th Congressional District. Just as Michael Jordan had difficulty staying away from the game that he loved, Jim Fournier has trouble walking away from his personal dedication to public service. In fact, if you ask the people of Orange County, they might say that Jim is the Michael Jordan of public and constituent service: He is a true professional, and has devoted his life to serving his country and his fellow man.

Today, Capt. Jim Fournier is retiring as my California Chief of Staff so that he might spend more time with his family and his beloved wife, Lucille. As he departs, I offer heartfelt thanks for his almost 50 years of service to his country. Jim Fournier has excelled in many fields: As a military officer, a sea captain, an engineer, and a public servant. He is, I am proud to say, a good and loyal friend who has worked with me throughout my congressional career.

As my District Representative and the Chief of Staff in my California office, Jim Fournier has become a beloved figure to the people who work for him and, more importantly, to the thousands of southern Californians whom he has personally helped.

Although it would have been equally well-deserved, Jim did not earn the title of "Captain" by navigating the political waters of Washington, DC, or California. Rather, it was his long and outstanding service in the U.S. Coast Guard that earned him this designation. He began serving our Nation in 1954, when he was commissioned an ensign following graduation from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The next 30 years found Jim on Coast Guard cutters sailing to all four corners of the Earth, as well as on the vast network of waterways throughout the United States. Among his varied assignments, Jim captained icebreakers in the Antarctic and in the Arctic Circle; he commanded the Coast Guard's 8th District Field Office in New Orleans; and he managed the Coast Guard's Congressional Liaison Office in Washington, DC.

Jim Fournier's rapid advancement and stellar performance sailing under the flag of the United States earned him several national honors, including one of our Nation's top military service awards, the Legion of Merit. Although he would not be one to mention it, a listing of the other honors awarded to Captain Fournier is nothing short of amazing: two Meritorious Service Medals; two Coast Guard Commendation Medals; two Letters of Commendation; the National Defense Medal, twice; three Antarctic Service Medals; four Arctic Service Medals; and 11 other awards. In between his seagoing assignments, Jim found time to study engineering at the prestigious Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and to do postgraduate work at John Carroll University.

Jim has often mentioned that the best import ever to sail to the United States from Canada is Lucille, his wife of 40 years. I have had the pleasure of knowing Lucille since 1988, and I agree with Jim completely. Jim

and Lucille have three grown children, and now Captain Jim is Grandpa Jim to his beautiful grandkids, Renee and Ryan.

Following his retirement from the Coast Guard and from private business in the field of engineering, Jim came on board with me after my first election in 1988. He set up my Orange County office from scratch, finding office space, hiring the staff, and organizing the workload. He has served Orange County as the first line of assistance for thousands of constituents who have had problems with Federal agencies—from the IRS to the INS, from Orange County to our most distant and far-flung embassies around the world.

I well remember one especially poignant success that Jim achieved. Two years ago, my office was contacted by two California youths who were on the verge of being forcibly resettled to Zimbabwe—a country torn by violence and lawlessness—as the result of an international custody dispute. Despite the fact that the youths were U.S. citizens, the U.S. State Department was on the verge of honoring an unjust ruling by a Zimbabwean court that would have required the youths to return to this violent land. That's when they turned to my office for help. Jim Fournier worked on their problem with passion—spending countless hours over a matter of months to guarantee the safety of these two young Americans. The creative energy that led to this success was typical of Jim Fournier.

Mr. Speaker, as my top California aide and advisor, Jim Fournier has established an enviable record of caring service to the people of Orange County. His stewardship in that role will long be remembered, and should serve as a model for all of us in congressional service for years to come. As he sets his course for new challenges, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Jim Fournier, and thanking him for a job well done—for Orange County, for California, and for America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably delayed in the District and missed recorded votes on Monday, June 14 and Tuesday, June 15. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes Nos. 232, 233, and 235. I would have voted "no" on rollcall Nos. 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241 and 242. I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 240.

Should you or your staff need further clarification, please feel free to contact me or my legislative director, Marti Thomas, at 225-4011 or marti.thomas@mail.house.gov.

RECOGNIZING DUANE AND
ROWENA JONES BROERMANN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Duane and Rowena Broermann,